

ENS. 017

### ABSTRACT

A catamenial tampon in the form of a soft, conformable, hollow bag which is disclosed. The tampon is capable of being inserted digitally or through the use of a unique applicator. The tampon preferably comprises a removal string, which can be attached to the inside or outside surface of the tampon. In one embodiment, the removal string is attached to the inside surface of the tampon, adjacent to the head of the tampon to facilitate inversion of the tampon upon removal. The tampon may have a cross section in which two of its sides are pleated, allowing the sides of the tampon to expand laterally. The tampon may be provided with a plurality of pleats disposed around its cross-section that are capable of opening in any desired direction. The outside surface of the tampon may be smooth, or it can be textured. In a textured embodiment, the tampon may have an outside surface which comprises microfibrils or other texturing elements extending outwardly therefrom. These may be randomly oriented or may be aligned in a particular direction or directions. The tampon may also be provided with an annular ring which assists it in contacting the vaginal surfaces, and may also be constructed such that it is generally cylindrical or circular in cross-section, without a major surface. A feature such as this allows the tampon to be inserted in any orientation without losing its ability to expand effectively in the lateral direction once inserted.